



An employee publication of the
Texas Department of Criminal Justice

March/April 2016

Volume 23 Issue 4

Agency News



Texas Correctional Industries reduces recidivism, saves tax dollars

For most of its existence, the Texas prison system has manufactured and sold goods to help defray its operating costs, but Texas Correctional Industries traces its history to the 1963 Prison Made Goods Act, which passed with two objectives: to provide work program participants with marketable job skills to help reduce recidivism, and to reduce costs by providing products and services to the TDCJ, as well as other state agencies and political subdivisions.

Administered by TDCJ's Manufacturing and Logistics Division (M&L), TCI operates 35 factories across the state and provides work opportunities to approximately 4,800 offenders, providing a wide assortment of services and manufactured products including, but not limited to: correctional officer uniforms, offender garments and shoes, bedding, janitorial and laundry supplies, furniture, food service and safety equipment, park equipment, security fixtures and fencing, flags, boxes, signs, printing services, school bus renovation services, metal fabrication, dump truck beds, dove-tail trailers and, of course, license plates.

TCI provides offenders opportunities to acquire job skills training through on-the-job training (OJT), short courses and apprenticeship courses. In addition to documented work history, offenders who participate in TCI's work programs develop a strong work ethic, learn how to succeed in a structured work environment, and gain real-world manufacturing skills and experience. Of-



Female offenders at the Mountain View Braille facility transcribe textbooks for education agencies.

fenders even have opportunities to earn national certifications from the Library of Congress, American Welding Society, Mobile Air Conditioning Society, and GeoMedia Professional. A combination of job skills training,

national certifications and documented work experience in a production environment helps offenders be better prepared for reentry and post-release employment.

While all TCI work programs help prepare offenders for post-release employment opportunities, TCI oversees four designated training facilities that offer specialized technical job skills as well as recognized industry certifications. The designated training facilities are the Daniel Unit and Wynne Unit Computer Recovery facilities, Ferguson Unit Geographic Information Systems (GIS) facility and the Mountain View Unit Braille facility. The computer recovery facilities provide Texas public schools with refurbished computers. The Braille facility provides transcribed Braille and tactile graphics to education agencies. The GIS facility provides GIS data conversion services to cities, counties and state agencies.

The M&L Division collaborates with other TDCJ divisions and the Windham School District to further strengthen reentry efforts. M&L collaborates with WSD to certify OJT

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programs, create short courses, apprenticeship and vocational courses, and partners with the Reentry and Integration and Parole divisions at regional job fairs to assist offenders in obtaining post-release employment. The division also collaborates with the Rehabilitation Programs Division to assign offenders to M&L work opportunities that correlate to their vocational and educational training, such as welders, truck drivers and computer operators.



An offender assembles a refurbished computer at the Wynne Unit Computer Recovery facility.

Manufacturing and Logistics Division Director Bobby Lumpkin commented on the ongoing and important purposes served by prison-made goods and services, saying, “TCI continues to meet its statutory objectives of reducing recidivism and reducing costs.” ●